

# News Release



**For Immediate Release**

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*Sights, Sounds and Critters Ready to Go!*

## **New Cuyamaca Visitor Center Opens**

California State Parks announced today that the new visitor's center at Cuyamaca Rancho State Park, with new exhibits, displays, sights and sounds, will be opening with a formal dedication set for 1:00 p.m. Saturday July 8. The public is invited. The event is free, no day-use fee will be required, and after the brief dedication ceremony visitors will have the opportunity to experience the new exhibits.

"This is a product of over twelve years of planning and efforts" said Cuyamaca Superintendent Laura Itogawa, noting that the planning was well underway before the fire.

Located east of highway 79 between Paso Picacho and Green Valley, the visitor's center is near the site of the old Dyar House. The Dyar house had served as the Park Headquarters and Museum for many years; however, it was destroyed by the October 2003 Cedar Fire.

The new exhibits at the center will offer such things as a close-up view of a mountain lion and several other seldom seen forest critters, along with a look into the different ecological communities on the mountain. One major exhibit tells the story of the CCC, the Civilian Conservation Corps, which developed the park in the 1940s.

"This is really the first time we have told this important story" said Itogawa, "It is long overdue and we think the public will enjoy knowing more about this fascinating piece of history."

A variety of authentic Native American artifacts are displayed as well as a replica of the Stonewall mine. Richly textured exhibits and subtle sound effects are designed to immerse visitors in the experience. A well-stocked nature store is conveniently located next door to the exhibit area and knowledgeable park volunteers will be present to help visitors find books and maps or even plan a hike.

The project was funded through Proposition 40, the \$2.6 billion dollar "California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Act of 2002." Voters passed this bond act by a 56.8 percent margin on March 5, 2002. For more information please call 760.765.3020.

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